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ABSTRACT

The Finnish labor market is sharply segregated by sex. Previous research has shown the work of women to be inferior to that of men in that the work of women is less autonomous, allows less freedom for self-regulation and self-determination, is more restricted in space and time, and is more monotonous. This study sought to determine whether the segregation of work by sex at the work place affected the qualitative aspects of women's work. Data were taken from the Finnish Survey on the Quality of Work involving a representative sample of the Finnish wage-earning population (N=4,502), with 48 percent women workers and 52 percent men. Workers were classified into three categories (single sex, balanced, and token groups) according to functional segregation. Results showed that women usually did profit from the fact that they performed the same sort of work as men, although this effect was more apparent for the high status white-collar than for blue-collar women. Results from the Finnish Quality of Work Survey showed there were no objective reasons women should not enter the typical male-dominated occupations since the salaries are high, work is autonomous, varied and less paced. However, there are not such reasons for men to enter typical female-dominated occupations since men lost in pay with the integration of work by sex. (ABL)

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DO WOMEN PROFIT FROM THE FACT THAT THEY PERFORM THE SAME SORT OF WORK AS MEN?

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Abstract: Do women profit from the fact that they perform the same sort of work as men?

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The Finnish labor force is sharply segregated by sex. This is a statistically well-documented fact and holds true for all Western European market economies. The intent of this study was to find out whether women profit regarding the quality of their work from performing the same sort of work as men. The qualitative aspects of work were: autonomy at work; lack of routinization of work; paced rhythm of work; and social atmosphere at work. We also analyzed monthly pay and demands for social skill according to functional sex-segregation. The empirical data came from the Finnish Quality of Work Survey (1984) which is a representative sample of the Finnish wage-earning population with 4502 persons of whom 48 percent were women. The results indicated that usually women did profit from the fact that they performed the same sort of work as men. Thus, the work performed by token women was more autonomous, less routinized, and better paying than the work performed by women whose work was female-dominated. This profit was found more apparent for the higher status than for the lower status women. For men the effects of sex segregation on job characteristics were the opposite than for women; men usually profited from working in male-dominated occupations.

DO WOMEN PROFIT FROM THE FACT THAT THEY PERFORM THE SAME SORT OF WORK AS MEN?

INTRODUCTION

The Finnish labor market is sharply segregated by sex. This is a statistically well-documented fact, and holds true for all Western European market economies. Occupational sex segregation means that men and women are concentrated in different sectors of working life: e.g. there are distinctive men's and women's occupations. An abundance of statistical information has been collected on sex segregation in the labor market not only in Finland but in other countries as well (Fox & Hesse-Biber 1984, Gutek et al 1986, Reskin & Hartman 1986, Kauppinen-Toropainen et al 1988). In 1985 about half of the Finnish labor force worked in occupations completely segregated by sex: i.e. in occupations where 91-100 percent of the workers were of a single sex. Only 7 percent worked in occupations where the proportions of men and women were balanced. Very few men and women worked in non-traditional occupations i.e., in occupations which were dominated by the opposite sex. Four percent of all engineers were women and two percent of all registered nurses were men. In Finland this segregation has remained very stable during the post-war period.

The intent of this study was to find out whether the sex-segregation of work, at the workplace level, affects the qualitative aspects of women's work. The sex-segregation of work at the workplace level, i.e., functional segregation, reflects the fact, that men and women perform different work tasks even though they may be in daily contact with each other. Many studies have shown that even though the functional segregation at the job level is extensive, men and women have numerous daily contacts with each other during their working hours (Kauppinen-Toropainen et al 1984, Gutek 1985, Kauppinen-Toropainen et al 1988). The daily contacts are less segregated by sex than are the work tasks performed by men and women. The frequent cross-sex interaction between men and women may disguise the extensiveness of functional sex-segregation at work.

An answer in this study was sought for the question: Do women profit, regarding the quality of their work, from performing the same sort of work as men? The following qualitative aspects of work were under study: autonomy of work: lack of routinization of work: demands for social skill: paced rhythm of work: and social atmosphere in the workplace. Each of these aspects of work is vital for work-related well-being and the self-esteem of workers. For the past ten years many studies have dealt with these qualitative aspects of work in the Nordic countries, but very few of them have focused on gender issues. In addition, monthly pay and its relation to the sex segregation of work was analyzed.

From these and other studies we know that, on average, the work of women is inferior to that of men relating to the above-mentioned job characteristics. In other words, the work of women is less autonomous, allows less freedom for self-regulation and self-determination, is more restricted in space and time, and is more monotonous. In Finland, as elsewhere, there is still a marked difference between the incomes of men and women to the disadvantage of women, and the position of women in the hierarchy at work lags behind that of men. An exception to the rule are the demands for social skills. In general, women's work is more people-oriented and "social". Women are also expected to behave in a more social and sympathetic manner than men even in male-dominated occupations because of traditional sex role expectations. According to Barbara Gutek there is a spill over from sex role into work role (Gutek 1985).

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The empirical data on which this study was based came from the Finnish Survey on the Quality of Work which involved a representative sample of the Finnish wage-earning population, with 4502 respondents of whom 48 percent were women and 52 percent were men (Kauppinen-Toropainen et al 1988). The data was collected through personal interviews using a structured questionnaire. The interviews were conducted in 1984 with a response rate of 89 percent. The average age of both men and women was 37 years.

A classification into three categories was made according to the functional sex-segregation of work. The classification was based on the respondents' own answers to a question: Is it women or men who do roughly the same sort of work as you at your workplace? (only women; mostly women; both men and women; mostly men; only men).

In an occupational category of single- sex, the sex composition of the workplace was uniform: it was predominantly either female- or male dominated. Seventy-three percent of the men and 66 percent of the women said that they worked in single-sex occupational groups. In a blanced group, the ratio between men and women performing the same sort of work was was about fifty/fifty. Eleven percent of the men and 14 percent of the women said that they worked in balanced groups.

Those belonging to the token group were either women working predominantly on male-dominated jobs (women engineers, for example) or men working on predominantly female-dominated jobs (men preschool teacers or male nurses, for example). The sex composition of the workpalce was highly skewed. "Token" in this context refers to Rosabeth Moss Kanter's well-known definition of the term (Kanter 1977). According to Kanter, the tokens have an "only woman" or an "only man" status in their workplace, and they are treated by the dominant group as representatives of their category, as symbols of their gender, rather than individuals. In this Survey the tokens were in a clear minority: only four percent of the men and four percent of the women were in an "only woman" or "only man" position in their workplaces.

RESULTS

Sex- Segregation According to Social Status

Functional segregation was closely related to socioeconomic status (Table 1). The higher the socioeconomic status the less segregated the work was, and this applied to men as well as to women. The balanced group was well-represented in the upper white-collar employees group. One-third of the upper white-collar men and 41 percent of the upper white-collar women belonged to the balanced group. The balanced group included for example teachers and journalists.

The tokens were in a minority regardless of socioeconomic status. The female token group was best-represented among the upper white-collar employees of whom 11 percent were categorized as tokens. As an example, the upper white-collar token women were engineers and architects, whereas the upper white-collar token men were preschool teachers and dentists. The few token women in the lower white-collar group were, as an example, technicians or police officers, and the token men were nurses, social workers, or clerical workers. In some of the literature, the female lower white-collar employees are referred to as "pink-collar" workers (Howe 1977). Thus, men in token positions on lower white-collar jobs are, in fact, pink-collar workers. The pink-collar workers were the largest female occupational group in this Survey.

Blue-collar work was most extensively segregated by sex: ninty-two percent of the blue-collar men and 82 percent of the blue-collar women belonged to the single-sex group. As an example, the very few token men were cleaners, cooks, or kitchen hands, and the token women were welders and auto mechanics. The blue-collar workers were the largest male occupational group in this Survey.

Table 1. Functional segregation according to socioeconomic staus, %

	Blue-collar workers		Lower white-collar employees		Upper white-collar employees	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Single-sex group	92	82	75	84	60	48
Balanced group	6	14	18	12	32	41
Token group	2	4	7	4	7	11
Total	100	100	100	100	99	100
N	(1258)	(631)	(415)	(990)	(326)	(230)

The Effects of Tokenism on Quality of Work

The positive effects of a token position for women were intimately related to socioeconomic status (Table 2). The women in token positions both in the upper white-collar and lower white-collar occupations were more advantaged regarding the quality of their work than women on blue-collar jobs. The results of the Table 2 are based on t-tests comparing the differences in means of each compound variable between a single-sex and the comparable token group. The symbol + is used to denote that with increasing integration employees benefit, and the symbol - indicates a deterioration in the quality of work. The symbol 0 is used to denote no change (Kauppinen-Toropainen et al 1988).

Table 2. Effect of functional segregation on the quality of work

	Blue-collar workers		Lower white-collar employees		Upper white-collar employees	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Autonomy (*	0	0	0	++	--	++
Lack of routinization (#	0	++	---	+	0	+
Paced rhythm of work (&	0	+	--	+++	---	++
Demands for social skills (@	0	0	0	---	++	---
Monthly wage or salary	--	0	--	++	--	+++

+++ p<.001	---p<.001
++ p<.01	-- p<.01
+ p<.05	- p<.05

*) Autonomy at work was a compound variable with seven items: to have control over one's work tasks; control over organizing one's work: control over the rhythm of work: control over the methods of work: control over how tasks are distributed at work: control over with whom one works: and to have control over the time of arriving at and leaving work.

#) Lack of routinization of work was a compound variable with four items: lack of repetitive tasks; lack of repetitive movements: variety of work: and the length of time it takes to learn a job.

&) Paced rhythm of work was a compound variable with four items: possibility to leave the workplace for personal matters: possibility to use company telephone for personal matters: the job requires working fast: and the rhythm of work is compulsory.

@) Demands for social skills was a compound variable with four items: attending to other people's problems: taking care of other people: understanding the problems of other people: and working in close co-operation with other people at work.

Table 2 also shows that the upper white-collar and lower white-collar token women had more autonomous, less routinized jobs, and their rhythm of work was less paced than of the women in high-status all female occupational groups. Also the monthly pay of these women was considerably higher, the difference between the upper white-collar token group and the corresponding single-sex group was statistically very significant ($p<.001$). Regarding these token women the answer to the question posed in the Introduction i.e., do women profit from performing the same sort of work as men, was yes. Women did profit from the fact that they performed the same sort of work as men.

An exception to the rule were the demands for social skills which for the token women in each of the white-collar employees groups were considerably fewer than for women in the comparable single-sex groups. The difference between the two female groups was statistically very significant ($p<.001$). Since social skills here meant skills for empathy towards other people, this difference tells us much about the different nature of their work: a female engineer or a technician needs fewer interpersonal skills than a female social worker or a nurse. Thus, in terms of social skills, the fact that women performed the same sort of work as men, was not found beneficial to them. The work performed by token women demanded fewer social skills than the work that was mainly done by other women.

The effects of segregation of work for men were in the opposite direction than for women. Both upper white-collar and lower white-collar men in token positions lost in autonomy, the rhythm of their work was more paced, and they had lower salaries than men performing work that was mainly done by other men. An exception to the rule were the demands for social skills, which for the token upper white-collar men were considerable greater than for men in the corresponding single-sex category. The difference between the two male groups was statistically significant ($p<.01$). Again, this is indicative of the nature of their work: a male preschool teacher or a male social worker needs to be more understanding, empathetic and co-operative than an engineer or a technician, for example.

The blue-collar women presented a special case. The consequences of the functional segregation on the quality of their work were less apparent. It was, however, true that the token blue-collar women, welders and auto mechanics, for example, performed work which was less routinized and in which the rhythm was less paced than in the work that blue-collar women performed in female-dominated workplaces, such as textile factories. Otherwise the situation for the token blue-collar women did not differ in a more favorable direction: their work was not more autonomous than the other blue-collar women's nor were their monthly wages higher. Accordingly, the blue-collar women got some benefits from their token position but the tendency was not as consistent as for the women in higher status positions. Again, blue-collar men in token positions had lower wages than men performing work that was mainly done by other blue-collar men: this difference was statistically significant ($p<.01$).

An additional aspect of the token position regarding especially the upper white-collar women concerned their hierachical status at work. According to the Survey, seventy-six percent of these women had a supervisory position which meant that they were in a position in which they could delegate tasks to other people and supervise them. Although the Survey did not question whether the subordinates were men or women, we know from other sources (Kauppinen-Toropainen & Kandolin 1985), that this is an exceptional situation in which women supervise men at work. According to the Survey only six percent of the men had a female superior. This is a marked difference regarding the hierarchical position of other women in the labor market. Thirty-three percent of the women said they were in a supervisory position though most of their supervision was of other women workers. Noteworthy as well is, that none of the token upper white-collar women had a female superior.

Social atmoshpere

We also analyzed the social atmosphere of the workplace (a compound variable with four items: competitive atmosphere at work: conflicts between supervisor and subordinates: conflicts between co-workers: and conflicts between different occupational groups). Surprisingly enough, the social atmosphere did not consistently vary according to either functional segregation or socioeconomic status. This applied to men as well as to women. There was, however, a slight tendency which showed that the upper white-collar token women found the social atmosphere more competitive and more conflict-ridden than the other women working either in balanced or in predominantly female-dominated workplaces. This was in the opposite direction of what we had expected (Kauppinen-Toropainen et al 1988). Whether this is a positive or a negative aspect of a token position for a woman, is a matter of question. In any case, competitive atmosphere is an inherent feature of any prestigious, high status job. Accordingly, a token woman must be prepared to cope with the consequences of such a competitive and potentially onflict-ridden environment in order to survive on those jobs.

Our recent study conducted with personal interviews with male and female engineers, architects, dentists, technicians, police officers, nurses, and day care center teachers (altogether 350 men and 400 women), has more deeply questioned the social atmosphere at female-dominated and male-dominated workplaces, e.g. female police officers vs. male police officers, and male nurses vs. female nurses etc. (Hogbacka et al 1987, Haavio-Mannila et al 1988). According to the results, the token women more often than the other women felt that they were targets of sexual harassment. Also, the token women reported more incidences of sexual harassment than the token men. As a measure of sexual harassment we used Sandra Tangri's six-item scale (e.g. pressure for unwanted sexual favors, deliberate pinching, sexual jokes, remaks, and abusive language) (Tangri et al 1982). For women sexual harassment was negatively related to job satisfaction: those token women who said they had been objects of unwanted sexual attention were less satisfied with their work than the women who did not report incidences of sexual harassment. For men the consequences of sexual harassment were unrelated to job satisfaction. Barbara Gutek (1985) has reported similar results in the United States.

Token women, however, more often experienced workplace romances than the other women. Some of the romances resulted in a marriage (Haavio-Mannila et al 1988). This was not surprising since women tend to marry someone who is equal to them in social status and educational level. Increasingly the workplaces serve as marriage marketplaces where men and women with similar levels of education come together. Thus, regarding the sexual ambience of the workplace, token women often found themselves in a double-bind situation: they reported a great deal of sexual harassment on the one hand, and a great deal of workplace romances, on the other hand. It is a matter of debate whether this kind of a double-bind situation is a positive or a negative aspect of a token position for women. Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1977) has pointed out that a token position for women contains a number of dilemmas and contradictions, which women must be prepared to deal with in order to stay in male-dominated work settings. Also, with increasing numbers of women in typically male-dominated workplaces, women become less visible because of their gender, and they attract less unwanted sexual attention. The result may be an erotic peace between men and women, and sexually more relaxed atmosphere in the workplaces. As a rule, both men and women were annoyed by the eroticized atmosphere at work (Kauppinen-Toropainen 1987, Haavio-Mannila et al 1988).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Occupational segregation by sex is very marked in Finland: there are women's jobs, and men's jobs. Occupational segregation by sex is not unique to Finland alone: it is equally prevalent in the other Nordic countries and in other Western European market economies. In this paper we attempted to find out whether women profit, regarding the qualitative aspects of their work, from the fact that they perform the same sort of work as men. The empirical data came from the Finnish Quality of Work Survey which is a representative sample of the wage-earning population in Finland (n= 4502: 48 percent women and 52 percent men).

The answer to the question was both yes and no. Usually women did profit from the fact that they performed the same sort of work as men. This profit was more apparent for the high status white-collar women than for the low status blue-collar women. According to our results from the Finnish Quality of Work Survey there are no "objective" reasons why women should not enter the typical male-occupations, e.g. engineering, technical work, or science. In such occupations salaries are often high, work is autonomous, varied and less paced than in many typically female-occupations. Also the hierarchical status is usually higher and well- regarded. Thus, women should be encouraged to apply for and stay in high-staus male-dominated occupations if they are interested in such work.

It came as no surprise, that for men the effects of functional segregation of work on job characteristics were in the opposite direction than for women. Unlike women, men usually profited from extensively sex-segregated work. Thus, the work performed by the high status white-collar men within the single-sex group was more autonomous, less paced, and better paying than the work performed by high status male tokens. Autonomy here meant that a person has control over his/her own tasks, has control over how to organize his/her work and has control over the rhythm and methods of work. A consistent result also was that, regardless of sosioeconomic status, men lost in their monthly pay with integration of work by sex. This situation clearly reflects the inequality in favor of men on our labor market.

An exception to the rule were the demands for interpersonal skills, which here referred to the demands for understanding the problems of other people, taking care of other people and working in close co-operation with other people. Our results clearly showed that the work performed by token upper white-collar men demanded greater interpersonal skills than the work that was mainly done by other upper white-collar men. Needless to say, the opposite was true for the upper white-collar token women for whom working in male-dominated work settings meant deskilling regarding their social skills. In general, women also found male-dominated workpalces more competitive and less harmonious than female-dominated workplaces.

Although the results from the Finnish Quality of Work Survey on the consequences of a token position were, on average, less favorable for men than for women, there should be some policies and mechanisms (comparable worth and job re-organization, for example) to encourage men to apply for and stay in female-dominated work settings in order to change the popular image that a professional care giver or, in fact a "pink-collar" worker, is always a woman. An ultimate goal is to erase gender-linked labels of different occupations.

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